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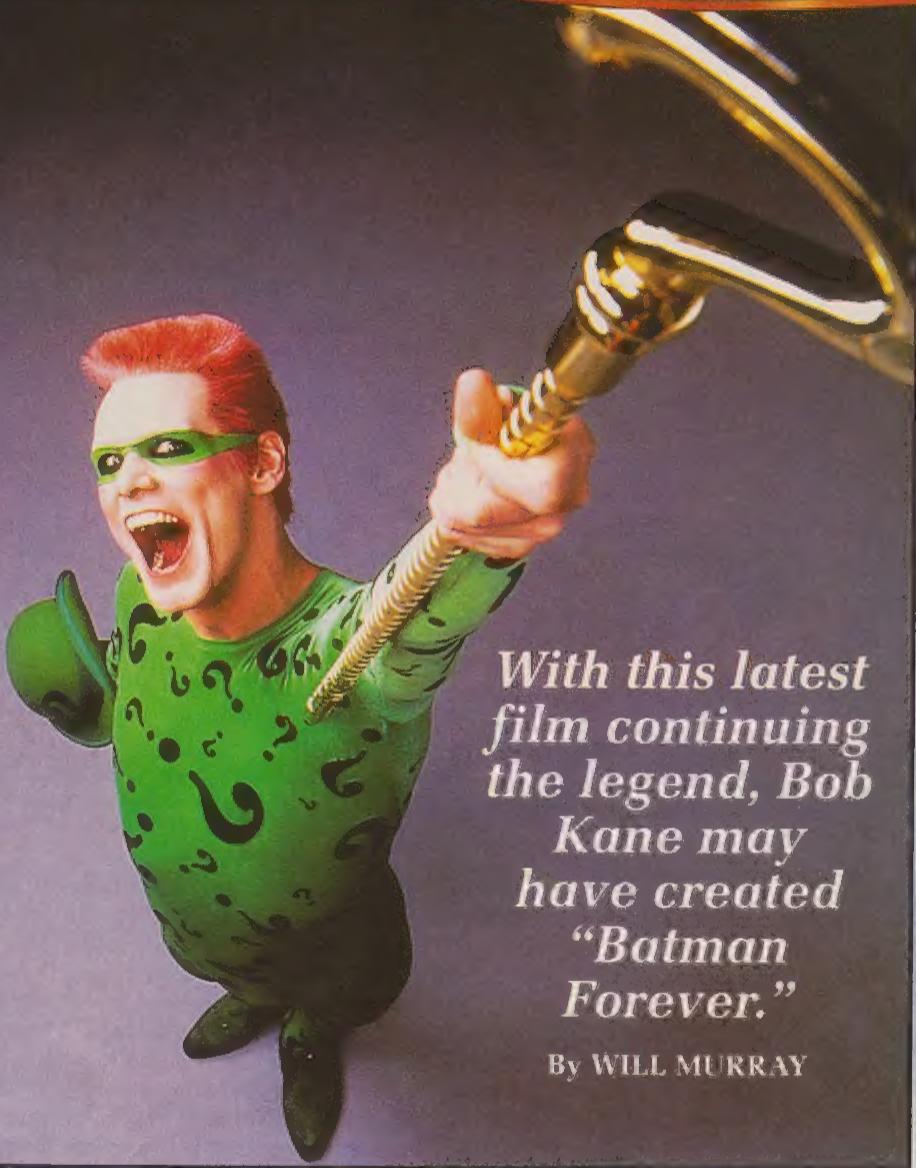
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# BATMAN FOREVER

# NEW DARK KNIGHTS



*With this latest film continuing the legend, Bob Kane may have created "Batman Forever."*

By WILL MURRAY

**B**atman Forever is not a sequel," insists Batman creator Bob Kane. "It's an original. It's like it has never been done before. It's a brand new ballgame. It's a new actor playing Batman, which makes it different right off. The whole flavor is different. The movie has a different look to it. The script is lighter. It still has heavy moments; it's not the TV show, but it has great wit. Batman has plenty of action and as Bruce Wayne he's on-screen quite a bit. I can't rave enough about Joel Schumacher as a director. I have very high hopes for it. I think *Batman Forever* will have a bigger opening weekend than the first two. I really do."

Kane is plainly enthusiastic. Over the last half-century, he has seen Caped Crusaders come and go. And he believes the newest actor to don the ebony cloak may be the truest of all.

"Val Kilmer *really* fell into the role," Kane notes. "He's very Batmanesque. As Bruce Wayne, he's ultra-suave. As Batman, he has a lighter uniform. He's able to move around when he does his own stunts."

Kane is very clear that he intends no slight to the previous Batman, Michael

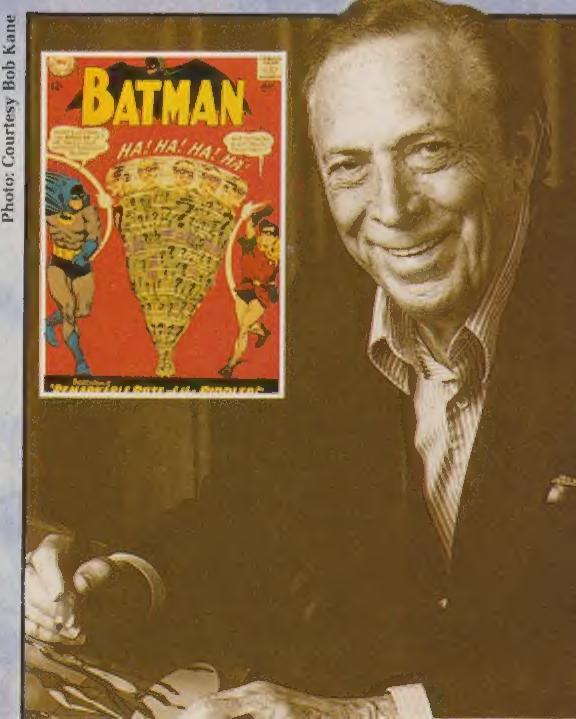
Life is like a wheel—it all comes around. More than 50 years ago, Bob Kane created the characters that grace the screen in *Batman Forever*.

Keaton, by his words. "I really like them both. Without knocking anything that Michael Keaton did—he did marvelously with what he had—I think Val is a little more handsome and more Bruce Wayne-ish. I can't praise Michael enough for what he did, but I would say that Val has an edge with his physical prowess. He's more like the Bruce Wayne that I draw."

More than just the man behind the mask has changed, according to Kane. "Nicole Kidman plays a psychiatrist who's trying to get through Bruce Wayne's angst," he explains. "This time they try to examine his angst to find out why he has this fear of being Batman. He's reluctant to be a crusader. It all stems from his mother and father. When they died, he felt guilt that maybe it was because of him."

**B**atman Forever reintroduces the character of Robin—not seen in the flesh since the heyday of the *Batman* TV show 30 years ago—to the live-action arena.

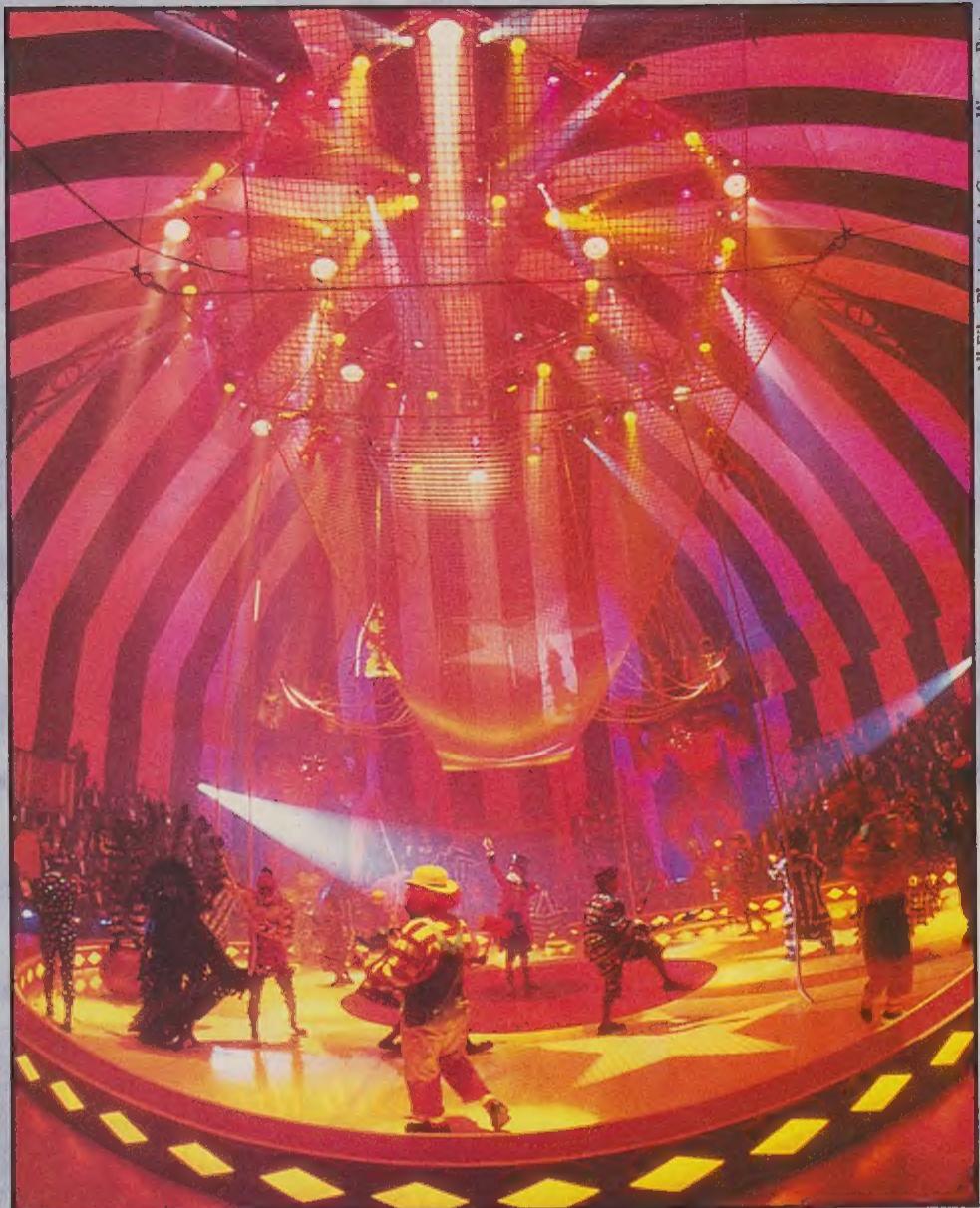
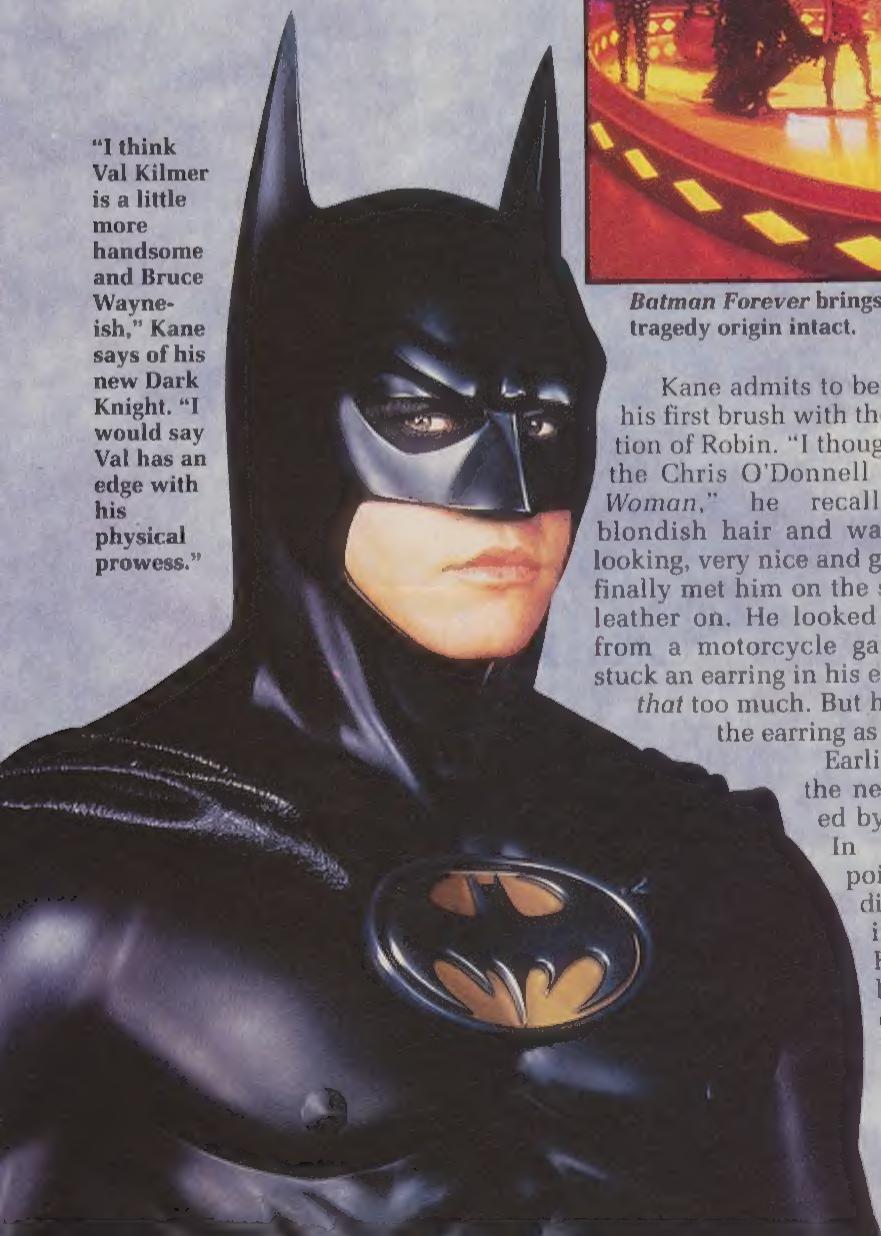
"Robin has a very big following," Kane observes. "We got a lot of flak on the last two films from the younger generation, who felt that Robin *should* be a staple. It's like Sherlock Holmes without Dr. Watson. I like it dark and brooding, basically without Robin—as I had Batman in the first year. He was a



loner and more of a vigilante, dark and mysterious. With Robin, it lightens up the tone. But this Robin wears a uniform more akin to the Batman movie costume. So it's dark. Chris O'Donnell is a tremendous actor. I loved him in *Scent of a Woman*. He comes in about three-quarters into the film with the circus, so we have the origin brought to life. Val Kilmer and Chris O'Donnell work very well together."

The new Robin is no Boy Wonder. He's older and tougher than the cocky Dick Grayson of the 1940s. "They wanted to give Robin an edge," says Kane. "It fits the script. He's a circus kid to begin with. Circus kids are not namby-pamby. When you ride the rails, you become hardened. He's incensed that his parents were murdered by Two-Face's forces when they came into the big top. Dick Grayson is a very angry young man when Bruce picks him up. And somehow he blames his parents' death on Bruce, because Batman also intervened in the mayhem, and somehow Batman's interference was the cause of his parents falling to their deaths. It's a convoluted scene. It's convoluted in the mind of Dick Grayson."

"I think Val Kilmer is a little more handsome and Bruce Wayne-ish," Kane says of his new Dark Knight. "I would say Val has an edge with his physical prowess."



*Batman Forever* brings the long-awaited appearance of Robin, with his circus tragedy origin intact.

Kane admits to being shocked at his first brush with the new incarnation of Robin. "I thought I would see the Chris O'Donnell of *Scent of a Woman*," he recalls. "He had blondish hair and was very sweet-looking, very nice and genteel. When I finally met him on the set, he had the leather on. He looked like he came from a motorcycle gang. And they stuck an earring in his ear. I didn't like that too much. But he doesn't have the earring as Robin."

Earliest reports had the new Robin played by a black actor. In fact, at one point, there were discussions about including a Robin—possibly to be played by Marlon Wayans—in the previous film, *Batman Returns*. "I'm

not bigoted, but I didn't think it would fit," Kane says flatly. "I'm all for black actors when they fit the role. This role has the tradition of starting out as Caucasian and it followed through on the TV show. I think the fans know and accept the origin. By changing it into, say, a Japanese Robin or a black Robin, it alters the tonality of the conception. I don't like to see my origin changed that much. That was my only objection when I first heard of a black Robin."

**T**alk of a possible black Robin naturally leads to the subject of Billy Dee Williams, who played a pre-Two-Face Harvey Dent in *Batman*, only to be succeeded by Tommy Lee Jones in *Batman Forever*.

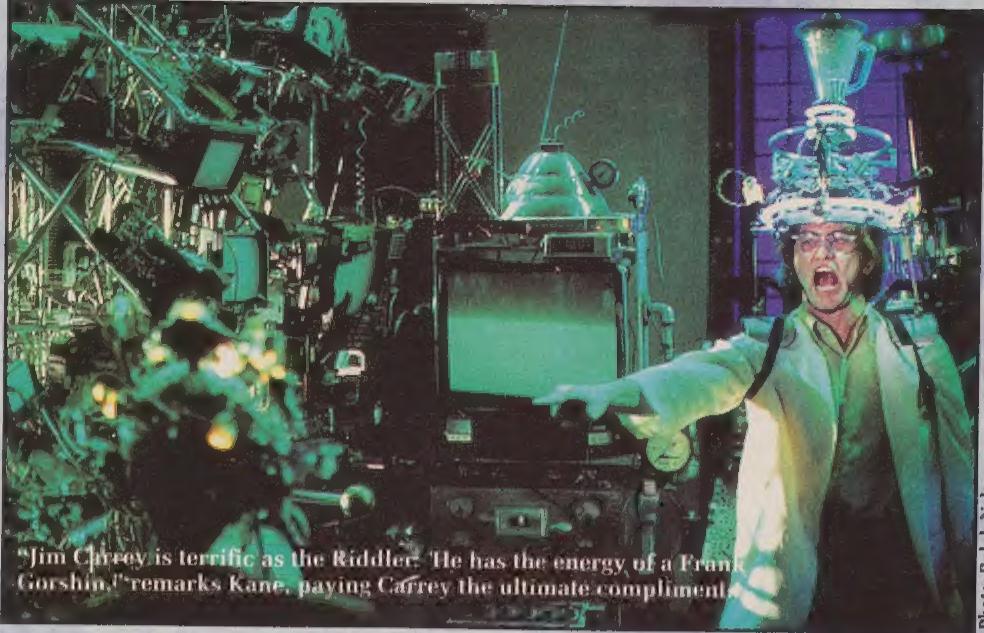
"They promised him the role," Kane recalls, "but I guess they wanted to stick more to the original origin. And they wanted big name value for the actor. Tommy Lee Jones is very hot today, he's in almost every movie out. He really gets into the role, but he doesn't play it overly sinister. He does

not play it campy. It's right in the middle. And he won't frighten the children as Danny DeVito possibly did."

As far as the film's other villain is concerned, Kane pays the actor what he feels is the ultimate compliment. "Jim Carrey is *terrific* as the Riddler," he remarks. "He has the energy of a Frank Gorshin."

Kane himself appears in the film with Carrey and Kane's actress wife, Elizabeth Sanders, who plays Gossip Gerty. "I have a cameo with Elizabeth at a party, disco dancing right behind Jim Carrey and Nicole Kidman," he reveals. "Of course, I had a lot of the extras trying to upstage me and my wife, as extras do. Elizabeth's a centerpiece in the film. You can't miss her. It's a small part but certainly more renowned, and it'll be more noticed than the walk-on she had in the Penguin movie."

Mention of the Penguin causes Kane to launch into a post-mortem of the very controversial *Batman Returns*. "I thought Danny DeVito's characterization was very good," he allows. "It wasn't the acting style of Burgess Meredith. That was campy, much more comedic, more like my Penguin. He looked more like him."



"Jim Carrey is *terrific* as the Riddler. He has the energy of a Frank Gorshin," remarks Kane, paying Carrey the ultimate compliment.

Photo: Ralph Nelson

He wasn't ominous. Tim Burton wanted the Penguin to be dark and evil-looking. He had to work with the origin; being thrown into the sewer because he was so ugly warped his mind. So, he felt like an outcast. Some of the scenes, like eating a raw fish, looked disgusting. I think that turned off many of the people who saw it. It wasn't so much Danny's performance, it was the way his performance was aimed toward the Penguin's ugly side. I suppose audiences want to find redeeming values, even in villains."

Harking back to the first *Batman* film, Kane reveals his all-time top choice to play the legendary character. "I've always thought of a young Robert Wagner as Bruce Wayne,"

Kane relates. "He had the chiseled features. In fact, when I first heard they were going to film Bat-

man in '87 or '88, I thought immediately of Robert Wagner. He has a husky build. They wouldn't have had to go with a big uniform to fill him out. When I mentioned Wagner [who made countless movies in the '50s and early '60s], they said he was a television actor—whatever that means. In Hollywood, they characterize you with what you've done lately, and he may have been a shade too old for the role.

"Tim Burton didn't want anybody that handsome, believe it or not," Kane adds. "He wanted an ordinary Bruce Wayne to become an extraordinary Batman, if you can understand the division. He said if somebody was so strong and tall and handsome to begin with, why would he have to get into a bat costume? He would go out and fight crime as he was. So, he wanted the opposite. Tim is very quirky in his perceptions—some of them are very good, of course."

Kane isn't shy about voicing his opinions. "Being the creator," he says, "I'm very perceptive about Batman, and very critical. If I don't like something, I say so. I did critique the script as the creative consultant, and made objections. They listened to perhaps 30 to 40 percent and cut out scenes that didn't work."

Asked to be specific, Kane expands: "I thought they could have delved into Two-Face's psyche more—the angst that a young, handsome district attorney would feel, having his face scarred with acid by a mob boss on the prosecution stand. I wanted a scene interjected showing him in his lair with all the mirrors covered. Obviously, he couldn't look at his image, with one side looking like Mr. Hyde. He lives with these two dingalings, Sugar and Spice. He comes home as Two-Face

"Chris O'Donnell is a *tremendous* actor," Kane raves about his Boy Wonder. "They wanted to give Robin an edge." They did.

and he sees one mirror has the cover moved aside and they're making up in the mirror. He goes berserk. So, he lunges at them with the knife and they think they're going to be killed. Instead, he moves over to his painting, like Dorian Gray, and he starts slashing one side of his face with the knife.

"I thought it added more dimension to the character rather than, 'OK, here's Two-Face.' And Joel liked it. But it's hard for writers to change a script once it's written in stone. They alluded to the fact that he had his face scarred by gangsters. I think there might be a flashback scene showing the mobster throwing the acid.

"I wanted more touches to add characterization," Kane continues. "When Dick Grayson discovers that Bruce Wayne is really Batman, he watches Alfred go through a secret door. So, he

slides down a banister and jumps into the Batcave. He confronts Alfred there, and you would think he would look around in awe. It's the first time he has seen the Batcave, and the first realization that Bruce Wayne is Batman. You would think there would be some reaction other than the look on his face. And they cut the scene. I wanted to see more of his reactions."

**W**ith only the third film, five classic Batman foes have returned. As talk of another film begins to percolate, it's only natural to ask, if not who's next, who's *left*?

"We've used up most of the top line of known villains," Kane admits. "I guess Man-Bat is left. And with him it would be a horror film and I'm not sure they want to go that way. The Scarecrow is a very good villain. He's from



Photo: Ralph Nelson

"Val Kilmer really fell into the role," Kane offers of his new leading man.



the past. If they want to dig into some of the TV villains, there's Mr. Freeze and Mad Hatter. So, I imagine they would have to delve into the ones left over or create new ones.

"I think there could possibly be a sequel with the Joker, because he was so good. And *Catwoman* will probably be a movie in itself with Michelle Pfeiffer, because she really stole *Batman Returns*."

As for the latest on that much-awaited *Catwoman* film, Kane can add little to what's already known. "It's in the talking stage. They're working on a script. It's a little ways off. It may come before another chapter—I don't want to say another sequel—they're trying to do original *Batmans* now. They *don't* want to call them sequels."

**N**ot content to be carried on the shoulders of the character he created almost 60 years ago, Kane for the first time reveals his latest silver screen inspiration.

Two-Face has the distinct honor of living "with these two dingalings, Sugar and Spice." The ex-Harvey Dent must be in condiment heaven.



For the third time around, the Bat-saga has taken on some new trappings, including the redesigned Batmobile.

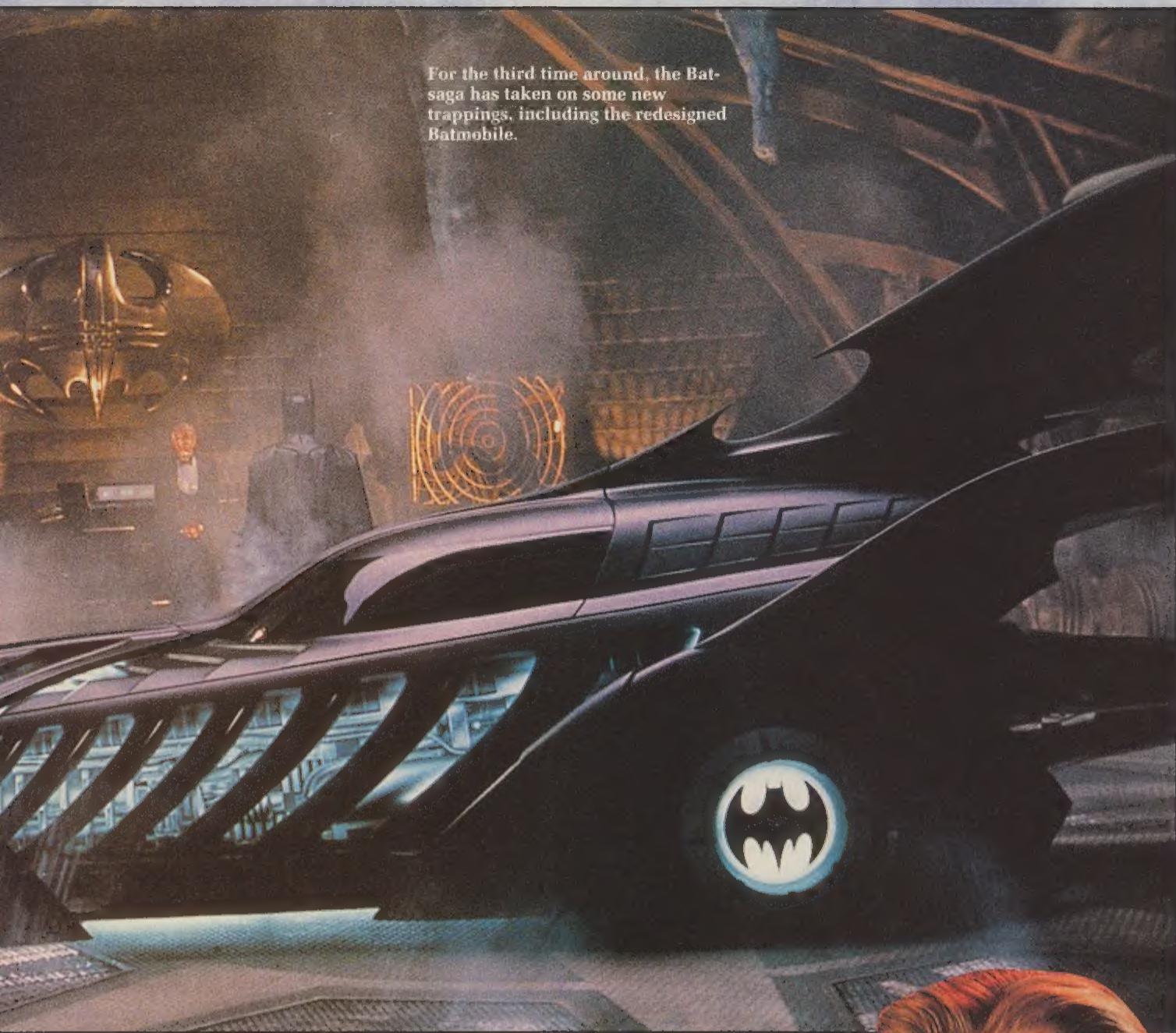


Photo: Ralph Nelson

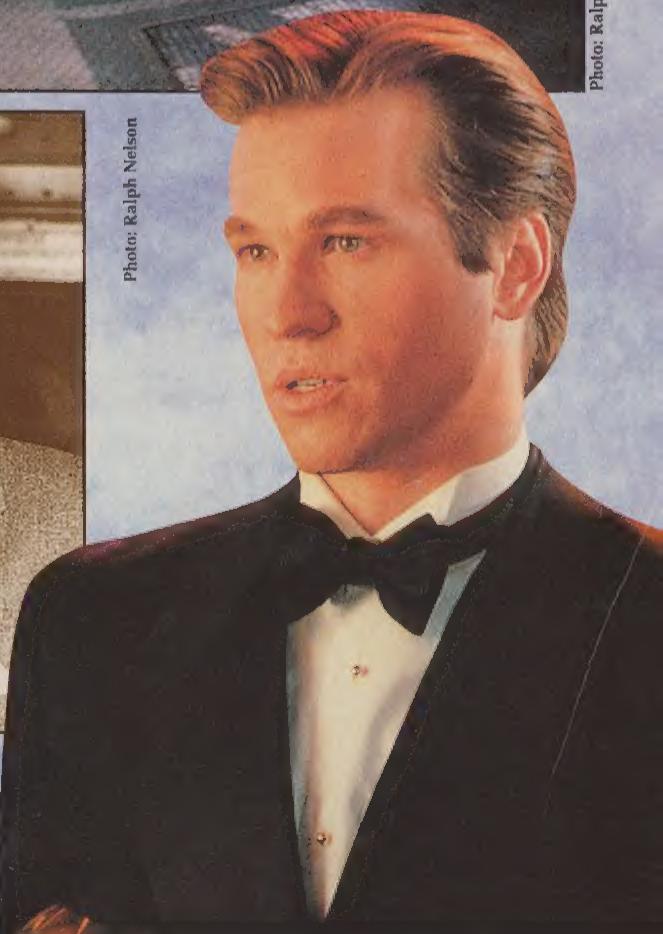
"I've created a new vigilante crusader called Silver Fox. *Silver Fox* is a finished script. I created the book, the original character, and Elizabeth co-wrote it with me. It looks like we're very close to a production deal, which I can't mention at the moment. I'm superstitious. It's a different kind of superhero. It's *not* Batman. It's as original as Batman—I can say that—with a tremendous twist ending to it. It's a very exciting script. I show the angst of a superhero, what he thinks, his insecurities. I get into his psyche more than just saying here's a guy running around. And his costume isn't the typical '40s skintight outfit of the comic books. He's not a comic book character. He's more like a Zorro—very loose shirt, a sash, loose pants and a silver mask that looks like a fox. So, it's quite different."

The choice of actor to play his new creation is something on which Kane has very firm ideas. "The part calls for a man with a purity to his personality,



Photo: Ralph Nelson

This new Bruce Wayne (Kilmer, right) is the closest to Kane's original vision. "I've always thought of a young Robert Wagner (above) as Bruce Wayne," Kane reveals.



rather than an Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone or Mel Gibson type," he explains. "There has to be another way to go. I would like to see a Tom Cruise play him. We're looking for actors now."

"It has a marvelous supervillain, akin to the Joker. He's the world's greatest escape artist and magician. Perhaps a Martin Landau would have that quality. And Elizabeth will be playing a major role in it."

A torrent of Batman product continues to fill comics and video racks, all but overwhelming his creator's ability to keep up. One spinoff that Kane singles out for special praise is *The Adventures of Batman & Robin* animated TV show.

"I thought it was great," he enthuses. "Absolutely. It won two Emmys. It's Nouveau. The art is extremely modern and tomorrow. I love the animation, particularly the film, *Mask of the Phantasm*. The movie didn't make a splash because they didn't advertise it. With the love story, it could have been a live motion picture."

**R**eturning to the formative days of the character in *Batman* and *Detective Comics* in the 1940s, Kane vividly recalls his main editors Mort Weisinger and Jack Schiff. "Mort was a writer. He was an intellect. He used to write a lot of the Superman stories in those days. I think, hands-on, Jack Schiff was more the Batman editor than Mort was. Mort was more into Superman. The stories in those days didn't have the in-depth quality that they had later in the '80s and '90s.

They were lighter. Jack had outer space things. He got away from the Batman persona somehow. He got off track."

"The best era was when Bill Finger wrote the stories with me. They wrote themselves and Jack would OK almost anything Bill brought in. But when Bill stopped writing it and Jack took over and started in with outer space stuff, it became too cartoony. They got away from the dramatics of what Batman was all about. But Bill had it down pat. He was a pulp writer. He loved Doc Savage, Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde and the Man Who Laughs. The Joker came from Victor Hugo's book, *The Man Who Laughs*."

Recalling the writer who helped Kane launch the Dark Knight in 1939, Kane grows wistful. "The foundation of the empire was Bill's stories and my drawing," he elaborates. "We worked on them together. I created some of the villains with him, and he created some on his own. I would talk the stories over with Bill beforehand, so a lot of the stories were mine as well as Bill's, but he literally did the writing. I'll tell you what was so great about Bill. He would present photos of the Statue of Liberty, or trains if he had trains, and all I would have to do is copy the statue. He was the only writer who would give you

In *Batman*, **Billy Dee Williams** played the pre-Two-Face Harvey Dent, only to be pre-empted by **Tommy Lee Jones** for *Batman Forever*. "They promised [Williams] the role, but I guess they wanted big name value."

clips. And that made it so convenient. Bill died in '74. He's the unsung hero. He came up with the origin of Bruce Wayne with me. I'm sorry, in retrospect, that I didn't give him a byline."

As for the many artists who worked for and with Kane, one is singled out for special praise. "Dick Sprang was the nearest to me," says Kane. "He was more comic than I was. I had a uniqueness. There's an old saying, 'To the victor goes the spoils.' And they deserve it because we created the whole essence of the strip. Without me, there would not be a strip. It's not an ego thing," he maintains. "I have my own style. Nobody could ever emulate my style. It was an original. Nobody can imitate an originator."

**K**ane is quick to defend his earliest issues against criticisms that they were crude. "They were not crude," he insists.

"They may have been a little

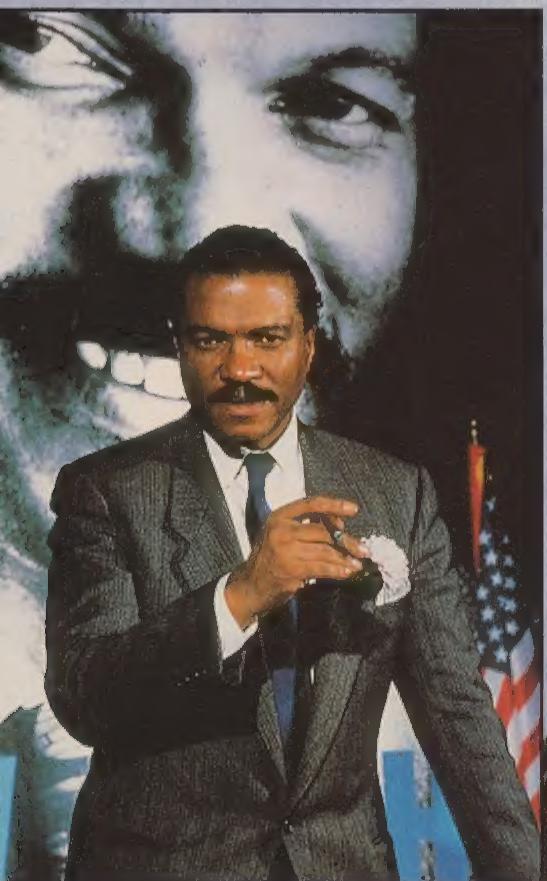


Photo: Ralph Nelson

rough, those first few issues, looking for the style. If you look at my early books, they really came on strong a year later. Some of them over-drew the characters. They made him look like Sloan's Liniment ads with all the muscles. Underacting, underdrawing and simplicity are better than overdoing it, in acting or writing or drawing. I don't agree that anybody ever made Batman better. They might have improved the anatomy here and there. But it lost the uniqueness of the character. A point of fact is that if you go to a Sotheby's auction, one Bob Kane original will get you \$10-to-\$25,000, and a ghost artist will get you \$100."



Kane recalls the heyday of *Batman*. "The best era was when Bill Finger wrote the stories with me. I'm sorry, in retrospect, that I didn't give him a byline."

Asked to pinpoint his favorite era of *Batman*, Kane responds laughing. "Obviously, the years when I drew it. I would say the first couple of years on *Batman*. Getting there is more fun than arriving. I had more excitement in that creative era than I did arriving, years later. I would draw 12-14 hours a day, until I would get nosebleeds from bending over the board. I had a studio in New York, with Jerry Robinson, George Roussos and Bill Finger. What an adventure that was! Even today at this mellow age, I may have more money and fame, but I would rather be young again and starting and groping. The first movie serial in 1943, I thought it was Cecil B. DeMille! It was so crude, but just to see it on film was more exciting to me than the '89 film."

But make no mistake, in 1995, Bob Kane is very excited about *Batman Forever*. "I think the choices were excellent this time around," he concludes. "At least this is the way I conceived the Batman, with Two-Face and Robin and so forth. I'm very enthusiastic about this picture. I think the fans will like it better."

(CS)

# Bride of the Bat Man

**E**lizabeth Sanders is out to redeem the family name in *Batman Forever*. Not the name Sanders, but the name Kane. As the wife of Batman creator Bob Kane, she saw her husband lose a brief cameo as a cartoonist in *Batman* due to illness, had a nearly-invisible walk-on herself in *Batman Returns* (where she was billed as "Gothamite 3") but now enjoys a very visible part in the latest Dark Knight film incarnation as Gossip Gerty.

"Gossip Gerty is a combination of some of the old-time Hollywood gossip columnists, like Hedda Hopper, Louella Parsons, Rona Barrett and currently even Oprah Winfrey, all rolled into one," Sanders explains.

"She's bigger than life, very flamboyant and a lot of fun to play. In the context of the script, she has a talk show five days a week called *Good Morning Gotham*. Although you don't see her on her talk show, she's known in Gotham as a celebrity talk show hostess. She's seen in the film at major functions, out and about among all the Gothamites, doing her thing and interviewing, catching up on the news of the day."

For Sanders, who has acted off-Broadway and on TV, this isn't her first foray into film. Small parts in *All That Jazz* and *Exorcist II: The Heretic* preceded this, her largest big-screen role to date.

"Two of my scenes are opposite Bruce Wayne [Val Kilmer]," she reveals. "One is opposite Bruce and Jim Carrey [as the Riddler]. And that's the coming-out party of Ed Nygma. I don't want to give away too much of the plot, but Ed Nygma comes up with this invention, so there's a big celebration. This is prior to Nygma becoming the Riddler. Nicole Kidman's also in the scene, as is Drew Barrymore as Ed Nygma's escort for the evening. The scene prior to that is the circus scene, where we see the Flying Graysons, and something terrible happens in that scene, which I don't want to give away."

Although she shares very little screen time with Wayne's alter-ego, Sanders is favorably impressed by the new Batman, Kilmer. "One of the scenes I was in, he does come down as Batman. I've really been impressed by the little bit I've seen. He seems to put on the uniform and he's Batman! What can I say? It's exciting. He even says he feels like Batman. Val's probably the epitome of what Bob created from the early days. I wasn't around in the early days because I'm Bob's second wife, so there's quite an age gap between us. That was way before I was born. But from everything Bob has told me of when he created Bruce Wayne/Batman, Val Kilmer really epitomizes Bob's feelings and what he wanted from the character."

"He's very contained as Bruce Wayne," she continues, "very much a gentleman, very elegant. And of course he has the square jaw that Bob loves. Val seems to fit so well in the part. I think he loves doing it. He was very concerned about Bob's feelings toward him and how he was playing the part. Hopefully, the fans will like him as much as we do."

Sanders credits director Joel Schumacher with breathing a new spirit into *Batman Forever*. "From my point-of-view, he's wonderful with actors. He's an actor's director. There's more of a relaxed feeling on the set. This is more fun. It's not as dark and brooding. Tommy Lee Jones as Two-Face is scary, but not repulsive. There's a bit of a swagger and 'Let's have fun with this.' It's more entertaining."

Now that she has established a new Batman supporting player, will Gossip Gerty return? Sanders laughs musically. "Well, one never knows. I would love to see Gossip Gerty as a continuing character. Joel said to me jokingly on the set one day, 'In the next Batman movie, we're going to have Gossip Gerty run off with somebody!' It's the kind of role that could continue. Anything could happen in this business."

—Will Murray



Sidebar Photo: Courtesy Bob Kane

# ONE NEW KNIGHT

Gotham City is a tough town. It is dark, frenzied and haunted by its own special brand of evil. These are the super-criminals scarred by bizarre obsessions, enigmatic loners who will literally kill at the flip of a coin.

If you're the heroic protector of this metropolis and its citizens, you must be ready for anything. If you're Batman, you must fight, indeed, forever. It's a difficult job—especially when you're the new Dark Knight in town.

"One thing I learned in terms of preparation," advises Val Kilmer, the newcomer behind the hero's cowl, "is that putting on the Batsuit makes you want to kill."

Kilmer, of course, succeeds Michael Keaton in that Bat costume. Fortunately, Kilmer is accustomed to offbeat heroism. His past roles include the outrageous Madmartigan, who fought beside Willow; the unpredictable Doc Holliday, who gunned down the cowboys of *Tombstone*; and the tragic Jim Morrison, who led *The Doors*. Among his other notable cred-

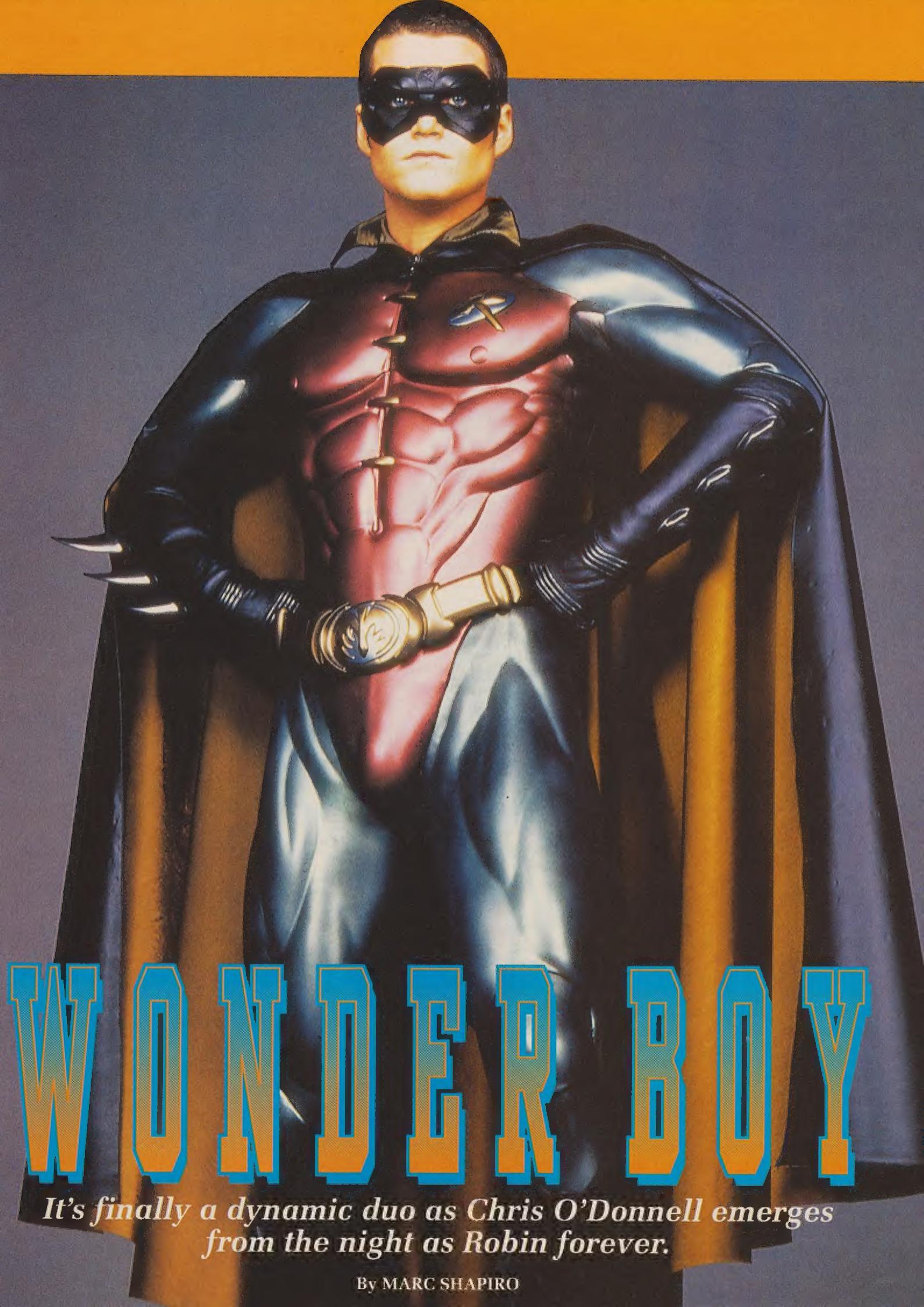
its are *Top Gun*, *Top Secret!*, *Real Genius* and *True Romance*.

And now he is Batman, a hero created more than 50 years ago. "The way that [Batman creator] Bob Kane set up the dynamics of the characters," Kilmer explains, "there has to be something archetypal and primary in the audience's interest, because the character has evolved and changed, but still the core is the same."

Delighted to be playing the role and committed to two further adventures, Val Kilmer believes *Batman Forever* will be a grand epic. But he doesn't want to oversell it, simply saying, "It's exciting to look forward to being entertained."

Val Kilmer is the latest face behind Batman's cowl.



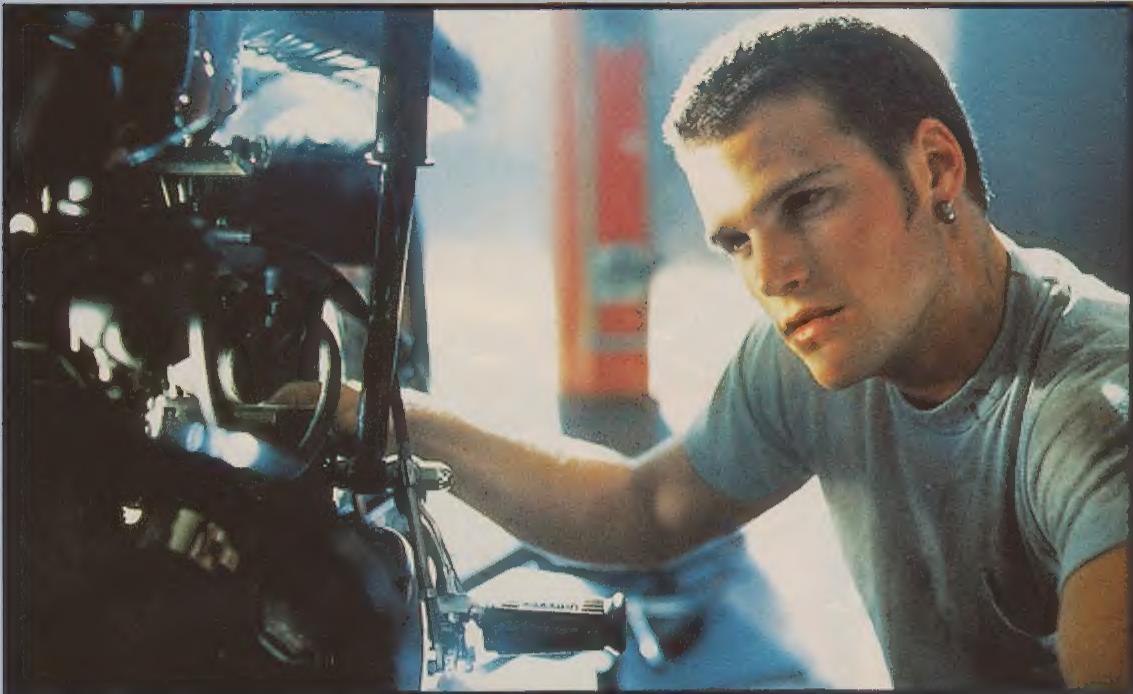


# WONDER BOY

*It's finally a dynamic duo as Chris O'Donnell emerges from the night as Robin forever.*

By MARC SHAPIRO

Photo: Ralph Nelson



"He's much tougher than Robin is in the comics," explains O'Donnell. "He's a cocky kid who rides a motorcycle and wears a leather jacket."

Chris O'Donnell had met with Joel Schumacher a few years ago and the director let it slip that he might be doing *Batman Forever*. But there was nothing in the conversation that indicated there might be a place in the film for O'Donnell. So, the actor forgot about it, went on with his career and eventually traveled to Ireland to shoot the romantic comedy *Circle of Friends*.

"But while I was making that film, I got a call from my agent, telling me that I had been offered the part of Robin," O'Donnell explains. "Man, I was psyched! I thought, 'This is going to be great!'"

O'Donnell, last seen in the action arena as D'Artagnan in Disney's remake of *The Three Musketeers*, marvels at the latest Dark Knight adventure. "This movie was like a spectacle," he says. "There was all this action, all these gadgets. I got to drive the Batmobile and the Batboat. It's like I was literally dropped right in the middle of a comic book."

He laughingly recalls that he got the first hint of what it would be like being Robin when he was cast in a plaster body mold for the hi-tech Robin costume that he wears late in the film. But he didn't truly feel like the Boy Wonder until he put on the finished outfit, ventured out of his trailer and ambled onto the set.

"I was walking out to the set and I happened to pass a mirror. I thought, 'Wait a second! It's Robin!' Being in the costume made it much easier to get into character because, when you're

wearing the costume, you begin to feel like a superhero."

O'Donnell notes that his initial enthusiasm for the role was fueled by his first look at the *Batman Forever* script. "I grew up watching the *Batman* TV show, but that didn't scare me, because I knew I wasn't going to be playing the Burt Ward version of Robin. I knew this was going to be different from the TV show just because of how different the first two Batman movies were. This Robin is totally different."

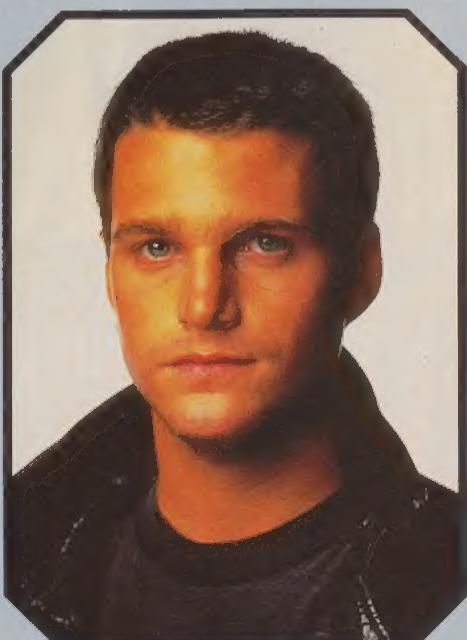
The young actor, who enjoyed *Richie Rich* and *Spider-Man* comics as a kid but had little contact with the *Batman* titles, was given some issues to study up on the hero. He discovered that Robin's "circus death of his parents" origin had been more or less faithfully adapted for the movie. But he also claims that *Batman Forever* paints a tougher picture of the Boy Wonder.

"Dick Grayson has this circus background and has been living on the road, so he's much tougher than Robin is in the comics. He's a cocky kid who rides a motorcycle and wears a leather jacket. The death of his parents proves to be a very traumatic experience for him and it makes

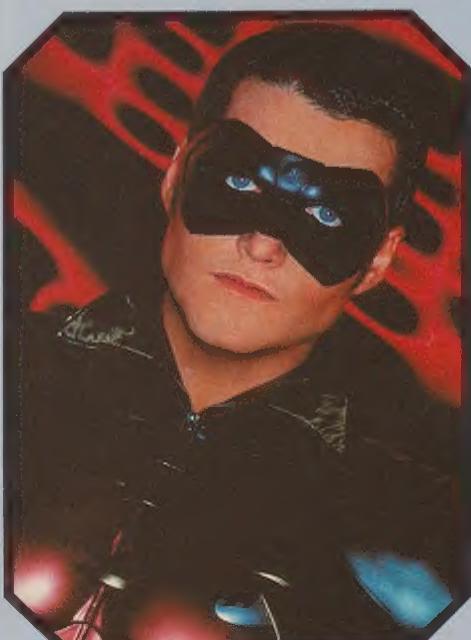
him all the more determined to avenge their deaths and to get back at Two-Face."

O'Donnell points out that the Dick Grayson-Bruce Wayne relationship is at the core of the *Batman Forever* storyline, and that it is a relationship focusing on the similarity of their origins. Both saw their parents die before their eyes, murdered by criminals. "Dick looks at people like Bruce Wayne and resents them. He doesn't like Bruce at first. And because Robin's origin mirrors Batman's, Bruce is very

Photo: Ralph Nelson



**Look everybody! It's the Boy Wonder! Just change "boy" to "man" and "wonder" to "stud" and you'll have Chris O'Donnell, Robin of *Batman Forever*.**



**O'Donnell is loving his time in the Bat-spotlight. "It's like I was literally dropped right into the middle of a comic book."**

sympathetic to Dick. But Dick doesn't want to have anything to do with Bruce because there's a basic distrust of him. Bruce keeps telling Dick that they're basically the same and that he doesn't understand. But Dick's response is, 'Look, buddy! We have *nothing* in common.' This Dick Grayson offers much more of a challenge to Batman. He doesn't just follow whatever Batman says. He stands up to him."

For O'Donnell, there were quite a few memorable moments in *Batman Forever*. He says that his scenes with Alfred (Michael Gough) "came out pretty well." He also liked the idea of "getting to beat up [martial arts action star] Don 'The Dragon' Wilson" in the scene where, after stealing the Batmobile for a joyride, Robin saves a woman of the night from a gang of thugs. And, he shudders, there was also one very scary moment.

"We did this shot a couple of days ago where I was weighted down at the bottom of a pool for a scene in which Robin is being attacked by frogmen. They were shooting a close-up, where the Bat breathing device I'm using is ripped out of my mouth and I'm struggling like I can't breathe. And all the time I'm thinking, 'What if I really *couldn't* breathe? Will they think I'm just acting or that I'm really drowning?' At one point, they were handing me another breathing device and the water was so murky that I had trouble finding it. Boy! That was scary!"

Like other Bat fans, O'Donnell was on the line when both previous Batman movies opened. And the verdict? "The first one was wild. I thought it was so cool and Jack Nicholson was so funny as the Joker. *Batman Returns* was just too dark for me. I thought Catwoman was just so damned sexy, but the film was too dark. *Batman Forever* doesn't have that problem," he continues. "There's a certain haunting quality to it, but it's nowhere

near as dark. This is literally a comic book."

O'Donnell is well aware of the uproar that arose in the comic-book community when Michael Keaton was chosen as Batman. He has no idea what kind of feedback has greeted new Batman Val Kilmer, but he does say that, so far, there has been no backlash against him.

"Maybe if I jumped on America Online or Prodigy, I might learn something, but so far, I haven't heard anything about *any* group being upset about my playing Robin. I do know that many people who went to the previous two movies came out saying, 'Where's the hell's Robin?'"

The actor speculates that Robin might have worked in the first two films, but that it would have required a radical change in the storylines. He concedes that being the actor who will finally bring Robin to the screen will do wonders for his career.

"But it is a breakthrough for the films," Chris O'Donnell says. "Robin is pivotal to this film's storyline and, even though he isn't in the movie from the get-go, his storyline is important to the course the film takes. Robin is definitely setting up a new era for future Batman films. Because at the end of this movie, it's not just Batman anymore."

"Now it's Batman and Robin." 



"This Dick Grayson offers much more of a challenge to Batman," O'Donnell says.  
"He doesn't just follow whatever Batman says. He stands up to him."

Holy cow and heavens to Betsy! It's rubber-faced Jim Carrey tickling the funny bone as the nefarious Riddler in *Batman Forever*. The rapidly rising Carrey, who toiled in low-budget filmdom—do *Once Bitten* and *Earth Girls Are Easy* ring a bell?—then scored big as one of the in-house members of television's *In Living Color* comedy ensemble. Then came the big-screen triple-whammy of *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, *The Mask* and *Dumb and Dumber*, three huge hits which turned Carrey (profiled in CS #45) into one of Hollywood's hottest properties.

How hot?

So hot that hardly anyone—*Batman*-ophiles or industry types—blinked

# The New E. Nygma



Jim Carrey presents the Dark Knight with a brand-new puzzle as the Riddler.

when it was announced that Carrey and not Robin Williams, the leading candidate, would play the Riddler in *Batman Forever*. Carrey is positively thrilled about the project. "[*Batman Forever* director] Joel Schumacher liked *Ace Ventura*. He had already been interested in me for the Riddler, but he thought I was a little too young," admits Carrey. "Then, when he saw the trailer for *The Mask*, he changed his mind. He said, 'OK, this is somebody who can do a lot of different things.' That's why I even got the opportunity to talk to him about doing it."

Carrey, of course, had seen Frank Gorshin play the part to what most consider sardonic perfection and the last thing he wanted to do is copy Gorshin. Fortunately, *Batman Forever* goes into more revelatory character detail about the Riddler than the TV series ever did.

"The thing that's great about it is that within the script, you see where the Riddler comes from, how he's created. So, I'm just going to go with that and take it as far out there as I can," he promises, smiling just a bit evilly. "But I'm not going to imitate anybody. This Riddler will be my Riddler."

—Ian Spelling

# LIVE-ACTION FACE

Should he be good or bad? Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones) will decide on the flip of his coin.



Once he was Gotham District Attorney Harvey Dent, and now, horribly scarred, he is not. Today, he is a creature of the night, half debonair civilization, half haunted nightmare. He is Two-Face.

And in *Batman Forever*, he is played by Oscar-winner Tommy Lee Jones.

Jones succeeds Billy Dee Williams, who portrayed the pre-Two-Face Harvey Dent in *Batman* but did not encore in *Batman Returns*. Somehow it seems appropriate that Dent, a character of such duality, has been played by two different actors in the live-action movies.

Of course, Jones is known to filmgoers as the relentless Federal marshal pursuing Harrison Ford in *The Fugitive* (for which he earned a Best Supporting Actor Oscar).

Other notable screen work has included *JFK*, *Natural Born Killers*, *Cobb*, *Under Siege*, *Blown Away*, *Coal Miner's Daughter* and *The Client* (helmed by *Batman Forever* director Joel Schumacher). He won an Emmy for his portrayal of real-life murderer Gary Gilmore in *The Executioner's Song*. He'll next return to the comics scene investigating UFO sightings alongside partner Chris O'Donnell in the comic book-derived adventure *The Men in Black*.

Now, his face split by the frightening makeup crafted by Rick Baker, Jones epitomizes what Batman creator Bob Kane terms "a symbol of Jekyll and Hyde," the good and the evil sides of Harvey Dent, the man called Two-Face.